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Chester Zoo News

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, UPTON - BY - CHESTER

August, 1964

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Editorial

Maybe the weather was not too favourable but Chester Zoo was still a popular choice for a day out during August Bank Holiday weekend. Attendance figures for Saturday and Sunday were normal but the number of visitors on Monday, 3rd August exceeded all expectations. Over twenty-two thousand, three hundred visitors came to the Zoo on that day. This figure broke our previous record for an August Bank Holiday Monday of just under twenty-two thousand, two hundred, set up in 1961.

We are happy to say that the new Tropical House is proving to be tremendously popular with our visitors. A number of the Seedeaters, which have their liberty in the House, have already hatched youngsters.

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COVER: Our Cover Picture this month shows Chester Zoo's pair of White (or Square-lipped) Rhinoceros dozing in their large outdoor paddock.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FIFTEEN SHILLINGS POST PAID

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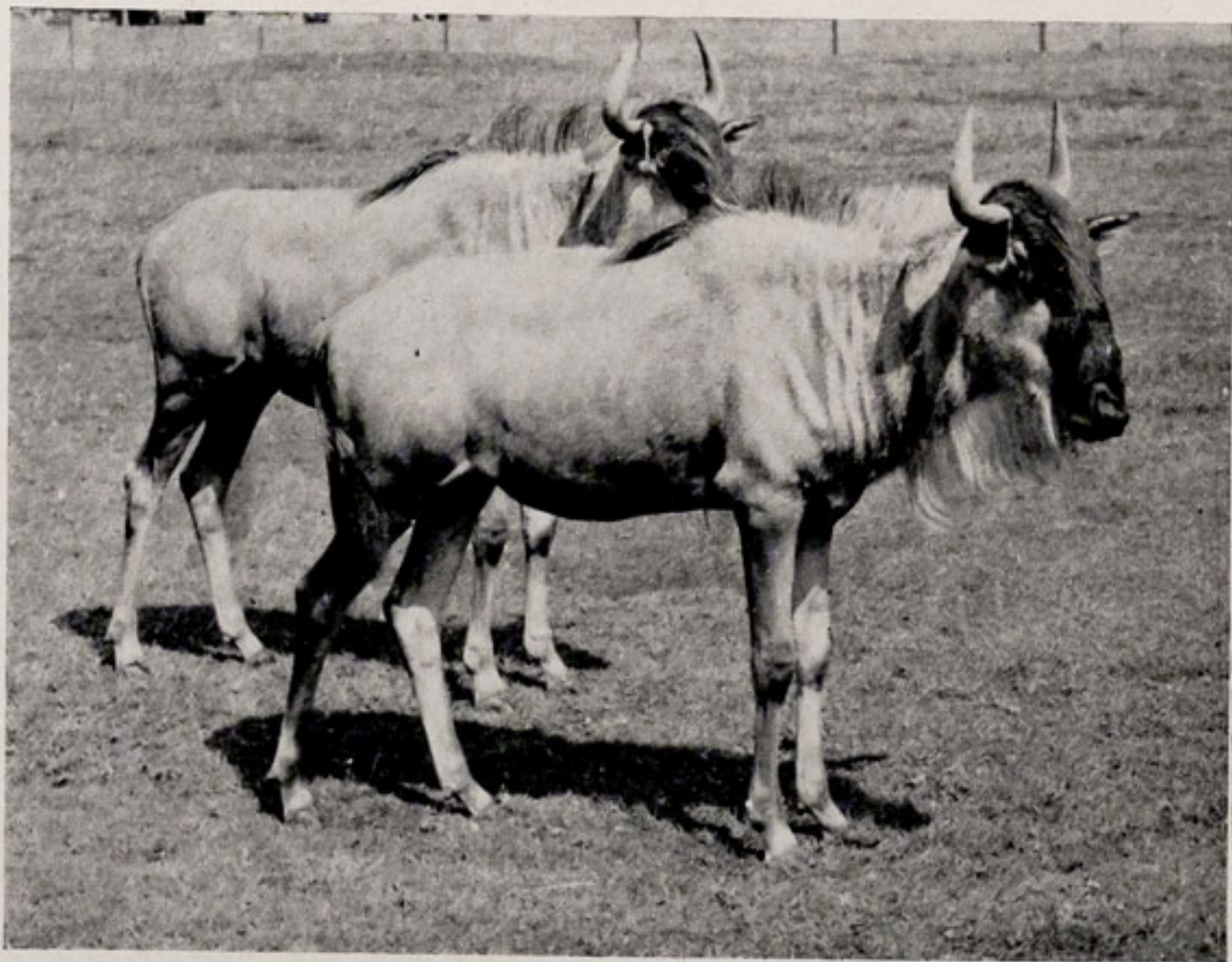
ZOO BABIES

CAROLINA DUCKS: Three ducklings were hatched on the 7th of July.

RED LECHWE: A new addition to the Red Lechwe herd was the male calf born on the 15th of July. We now have eight Lechwe — three males and five females — and six of these were born in the Gardens.

BRINDLED GNU: Three Brindled Gnu calves arrived during July — the first being born on the 18th, the second on the 21st and the third on the 23rd. Our entire collection of Gnu (or Wildebeeste) will be moved to one of the two new paddocks opposite the Rhino House in the near future. In common with the other new paddocks in this area, only a low wall will separate the animals from visitors.

CHINCHILLA: Another baby Chinchilla was born in the Small Mammal House on the 3rd of August.



BRINDLED GNU

Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby



CARACAL LYNX TWINS

G. Kerr



PUMA TRIPLETS

G. Kerr

PURCHASES AND PRESENTATIONS

3rd July — a pair of Black-backed Jackals (see picture on opposite page) and a pair of Kama Foxes (sometimes referred to as Silver Jackals) were presented by the Director of Pretoria Zoo, South Africa. The new Jackals and the Foxes are housed in the Zoo's Quarantine Quarters at present.

5th July — two Common Boas, four Cooke's Tree Boas, two Vine Snakes and four as yet unidentified snakes were received in exchange from Bristol Zoo.

6th July — four African Grey Parrots were presented and have found new homes with our existing collection in the Parrot House.

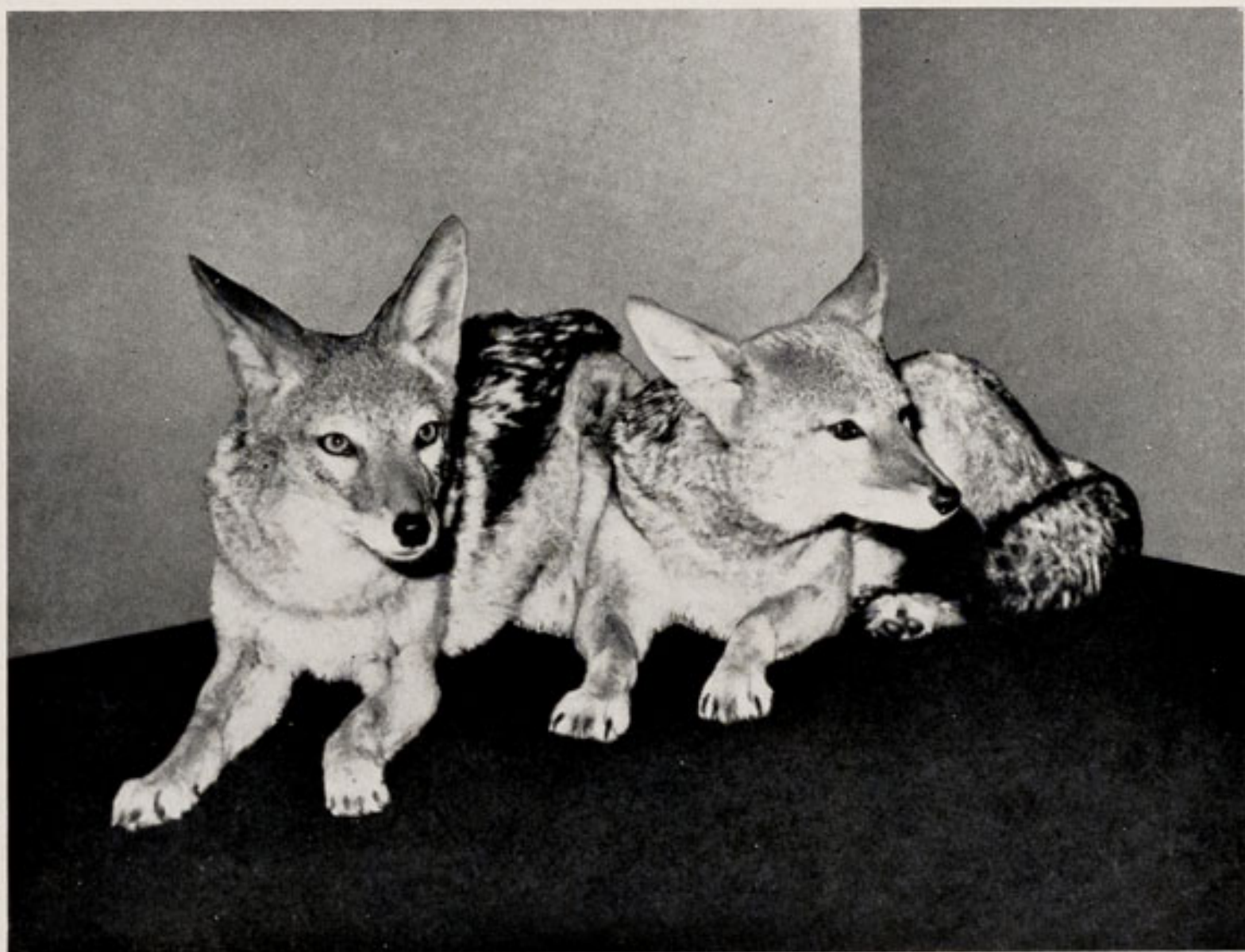
8th July — an interesting group of fourteen Hummingbirds was released in the Tropical House.

10th July — Violet-eared Waxbills, Grenadier Waxbills, Red-headed Finches, Blue-winged Sivas and a Hunting Cissa (or Green Magpie) were released in the Tropical House.

12th July — a male White-faced Capuchin Monkey, which had formerly been a house pet, was presented and is now on show in the Monkey House. The Capuchin shares an enclosure with a young Woolly Monkey and an adult Squirrel Monkey, with whom he is already on the best of terms.

19th July — new exhibits for the reptile collection — a pair of Gila Monsters. Gila Monsters are one of the two existing species of poisonous lizards and can grow to between one and a half and two feet long. Their name derives from the Gila Desert of Arizona and they are found in the southwest of the U.S.A. and Mexico. Our two Gila Monsters are young specimens, only ten inches long when they arrived. Their colouration is dark brown with pink spots. Although the venom of these lizards is capable of killing small mammals and birds, it is not normally fatal to human beings.

21st July — birds purchased on this date included Star, Aurora, Cuban, Lavender and Green Singing Finches, Diamond Doves, Black-cheeked, Golden breasted, Fawn-breasted, Sundervall's, Red-eared and Orange-cheeked Waxbills, Non-pareil and Rainbow Buntings and one Red Avadavat.



BLACK-BACKED JACKALS

Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby

22nd July — another small collection of birds — made up of Silver-blue Tanagers, Red-breasted Marshbirds and Kiskadee Tyrant Flycatchers — was released in the Tropical House.

26th July — a consignment of snakes received on this date included Tree Snakes, Night Adders, young Gaboon Vipers, Blanding's Tree Snakes and two as yet unidentified snakes.

1st August — one Senegal Parrot presented.

3rd August — one Peahen received in exchange for a Tawny Owl.

9th August — "Congola" arrived — see page eight.

11th August — the following were newcomers to the Reptile Collection — one Black Tree Snake, one Nose-horned Viper, two Black and White Cobras, two Jameson's Green Mambas, three Blanding's Tree Snakes, one Egg-eating Snake and one Green Tree Viper.

12th August — pair of Kinkajous presented.

14th August — a White-backed Whydah, a pair of Green Cardinals and three male Garden Dormice (collected in Portugal) presented.

"Jumbolino" arrived—see page eight.

THE GARDENS IN MIDSUMMER

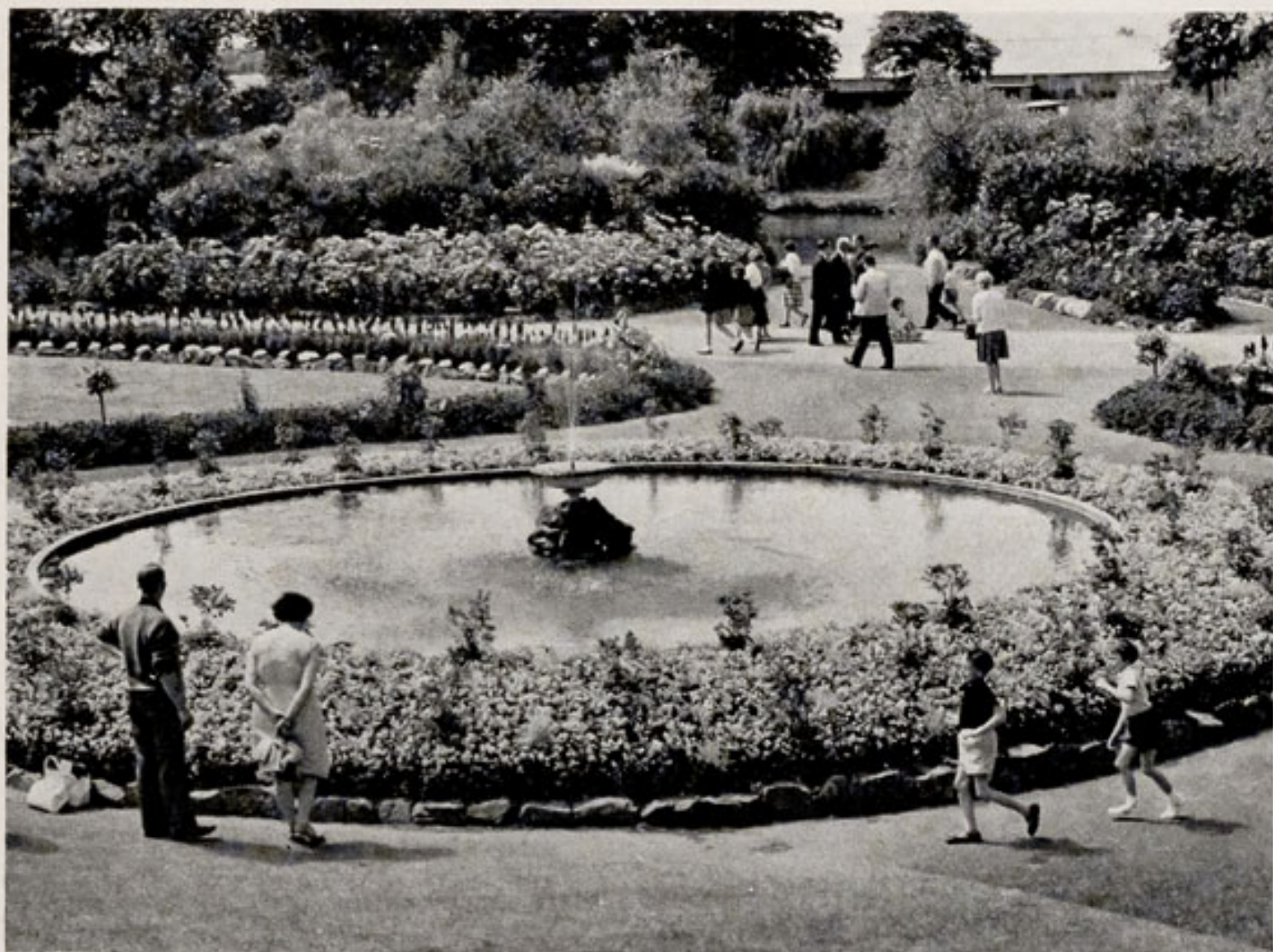
This is the time of year when we can view the results of the past year's work and planning and perhaps make comparisons with other years.

The summer bedding is now well established and will, of course, improve both in density of growth and in abundance of flower through August and September. In general we feel satisfied with the results, although the plants have been longer than usual in filling up their allotted spaces. This was due to the dry spell from mid June to mid July — very drying winds were also experienced during this time. Now, after the recent heavy rain, we can almost see the increase in plant growth. Geraniums have enjoyed the dry spell and, rather surprisingly, Begonias are very good this year. These latter have had frequent waterings, as they resent any dryness at the root.

It has been an excellent year for Roses — with masses of flower which have lasted well. The Roses have also produced good growth for continuance of flower through the rest of the summer months.

All the plants in the new Tropical House are growing rapidly. The house no longer has a newly-planted look, but more of the intended jungle appearance — providing cover for the many tropical birds now at liberty.

No variety of plant can be chosen as growing better than others, as they are all doing as well as we expected them to do. However, we are having difficulties with some Begonia species. These particular species are difficult to grow and need extra care and attention to grow them really well in pots. When planted out in borders we have less control over watering, etc., and those Begonias which we find are unsuited to border conditions have been replaced with other species.



K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

PART OF THE SUMMER BEDDING DISPLAY BY THE FOUNTAIN RESTAURANT

Most of the work of the gardens at this time of the year is routine, such as hedge cutting, grass cutting, weeding, lawn mowing and removal of dead flowers from the beds and borders. Throughout the summer two men are continuously employed removing dead flowers from the Rose Bushes and keeping the Rose beds tidy.

In the nursery all spring bedding plants have been planted out and are showing promise of providing the spring of 1965 with a good display in the Zoo Gardens.

FIRST ANNIVERSARY

On the 7th of August the rarest exhibit in our reptile collection, the young male Tuatara, from New Zealand, completed his first twelve months at Chester Zoo. The move from the old Reptile House to his new quarters in the Tropical House did not upset him in the slightest and he continues in excellent health.

BABY BULL ELEPHANT FOR CHESTER ZOO

"Jumbolino" the baby African bull Elephant arrived in Chester at the unearthly hour of two in the morning of Friday, 14th August. Despite his disturbed night he was full of bounce when he stepped out of his crate. We mentioned last month that Jumbolino weighed approximately eight hundred pounds, but this weight was recorded in April and now he is nearer half a ton. He is absolutely bursting with good health and not in the least nervous of his new elephant companions — after all he had not seen another elephant since he was abandoned at six months old and he is now two and a half. "Judy" attempted to mother him, but soon discovered that it was a playmate Jumbolino wanted and not a nurse. Now the two elephants give visitors endless amusement with their games.

ARRIVAL OF CONGOLA

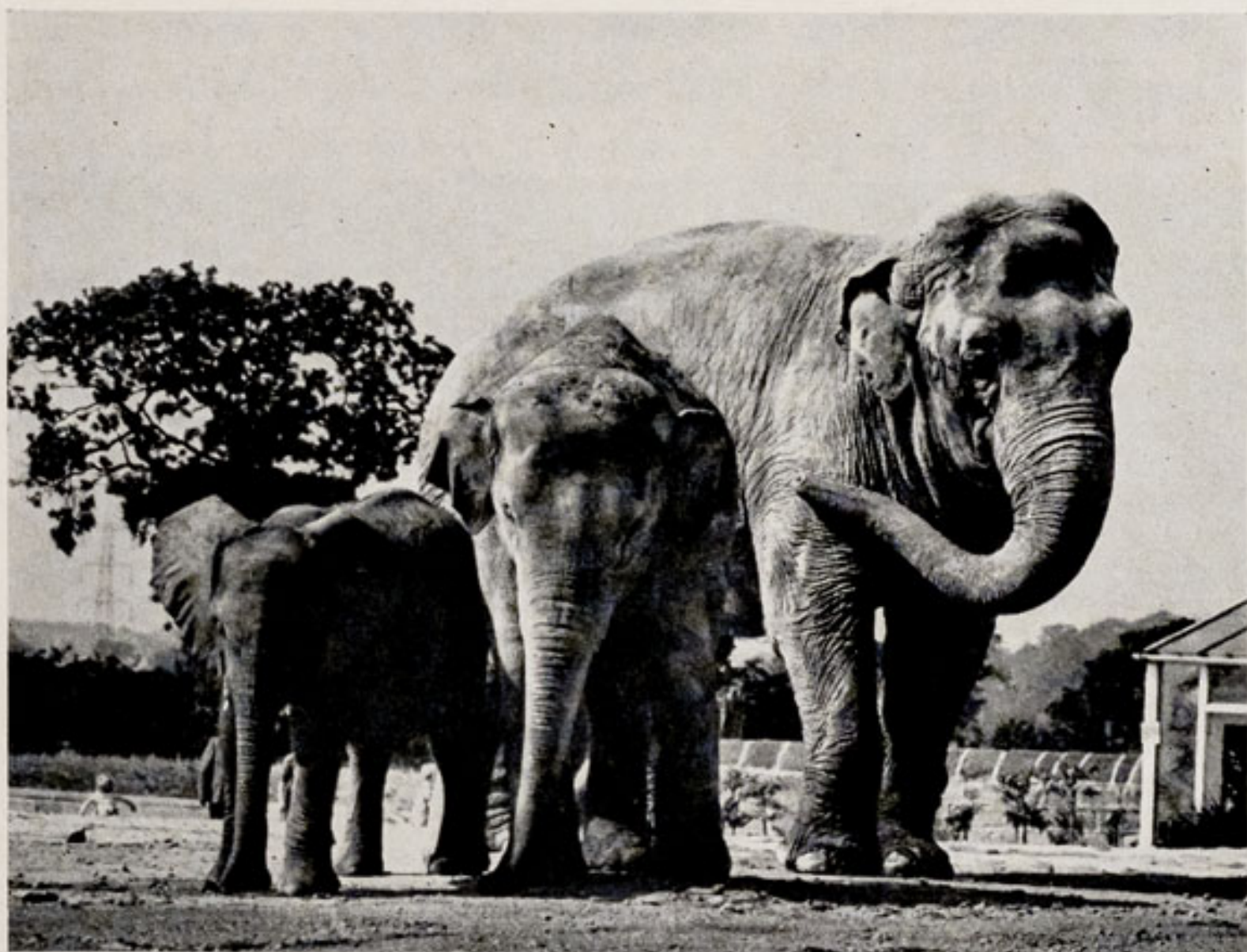
"Congola", a six-year-old Black-faced Chimpanzee arrived at Chester Zoo on Sunday, 9th August. He was flown from Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia to London Airport and brought up to Chester by road. Congola had been the house pet of Mr. John Newby of Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia, for five years and is extremely tame and in wonderful condition. We hope to introduce him to three of our younger Chimpanzees — "Algie", "Jane", and "Jeannie" — in the very near future. Meantime Congola has settled down well and has already made friends with all his new human companions.

AVICULTURAL SOCIETY AT CHESTER ZOO

The Avicultural Society paid its annual visit to Chester Zoo on the 8th of July. Members had lunch in the Fountain Restaurant before touring the Gardens. Needless to say the Tropical House was of particular interest.

SAMMY

Perhaps the best known of Chester Zoo's exhibits died on the 21st of July. This was "Sammy", the Californian Sea Lion, who



K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.

"JUMBOLINO", "JUDY" AND "BARBAR"

had spent seventeen years and two months at Chester, having arrived as long ago as May, 1947. He was estimated to be several years old at that time and grew into a massive specimen, as can be seen from the photograph of page 11.

Sammy was always a character and few people living in the area surrounding the Zoo were not familiar with his voice. One way and another he had quite a reputation, first for his voice and later as a "lady killer". Sammy had a number of wives during his stay at Chester and for some unaccountable reason took a dislike to one of them. He attacked her so brutally that she died from her injuries and forever after Sammy was blamed if a Sea Lion died or in fact if there was any trouble in the pool whatsoever.

Sammy's "press cuttings" were numerous — the quotes following are from two of these.

"Sammy, Chester Zoo's amorous Sea lion, is in love again. And he wants to tell the whole world about it. The noisy honk-honk with which he serenades his lady love at midnight is keeping the whole neighbourhood awake."

"One of the three new wives for Sammy, Chester Zoo's Sea lion, took an appalled glance at him . . . and quit the communal pool at midnight."

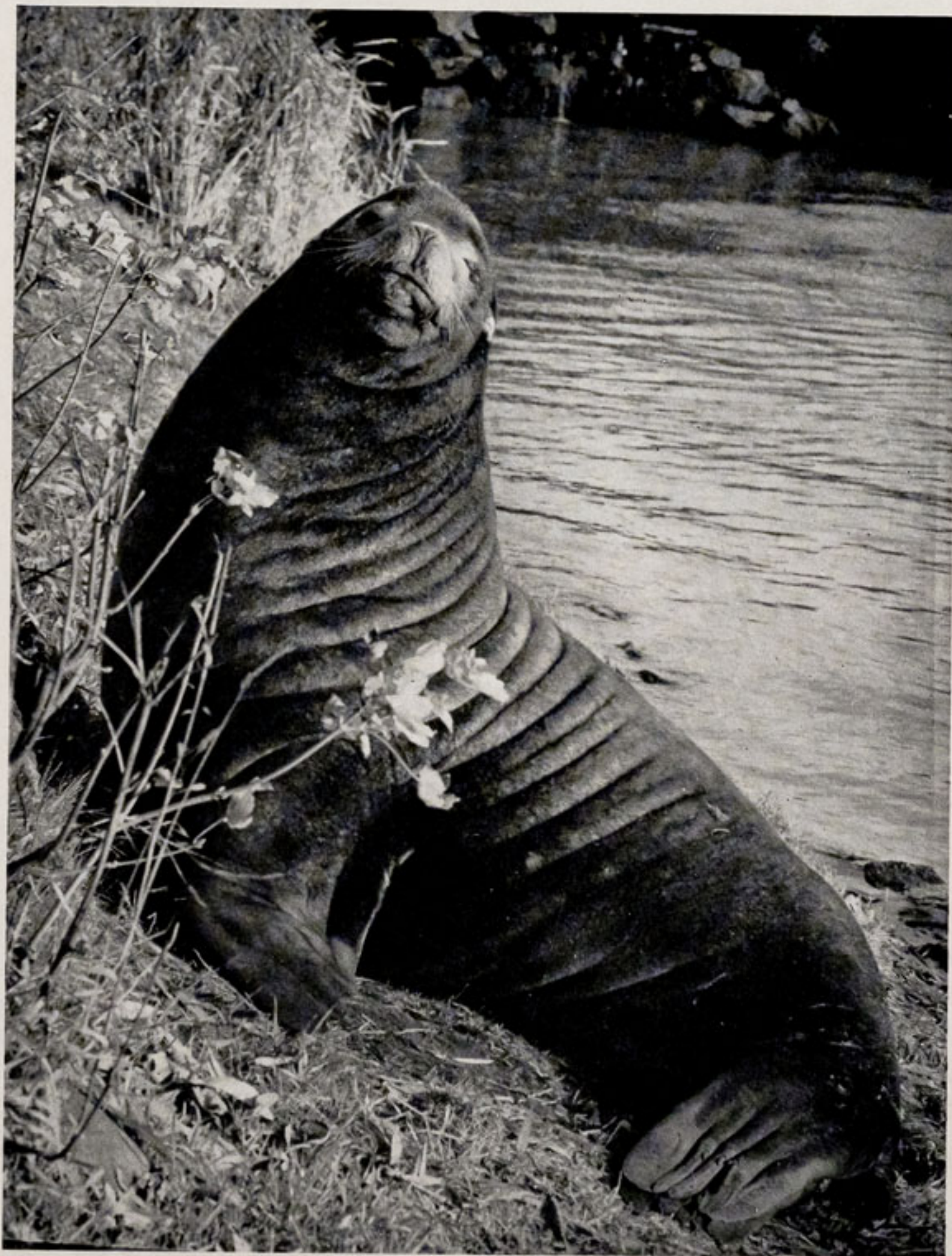
LLAMAS

In the same family as the Camels are the Llamas of South America. They are humpless and smaller than the Camel, with short tails and long woolly coats. The wild species are known as the Guanaco — *Lama huanacos* — ranging from Ecuador to Tierra del Fuego and are common on the plains of Patagonia and the Vicuna — *Lama vicugna* — which is the smallest of the Llama group and lives in the Andes Mountains in Peru, Bolivia and southern Ecuador. Vicunas are comparatively rare.

The Llama most commonly seen in Zoos is the domesticated form of the Guanaco — *Lama glama*. In Peru and Bolivia the males are used as pack animals — the females for breeding and wool production (Llama meat is reputed to be more palatable than mutton.) The coat colour varies considerably and may be black, brown, white, black and white, brown and white or mottled. Llamas are usually quiet, docile animals but when annoyed they can spit — ejecting an unpleasant mixture of saliva and part of the stomach contents.

Another domesticated form of the Guanaco is the Alpaca — *Lama pacos* — which has a longer and softer coat and is usually white or completely black. They are kept in Peru and Bolivia mainly for wool production.

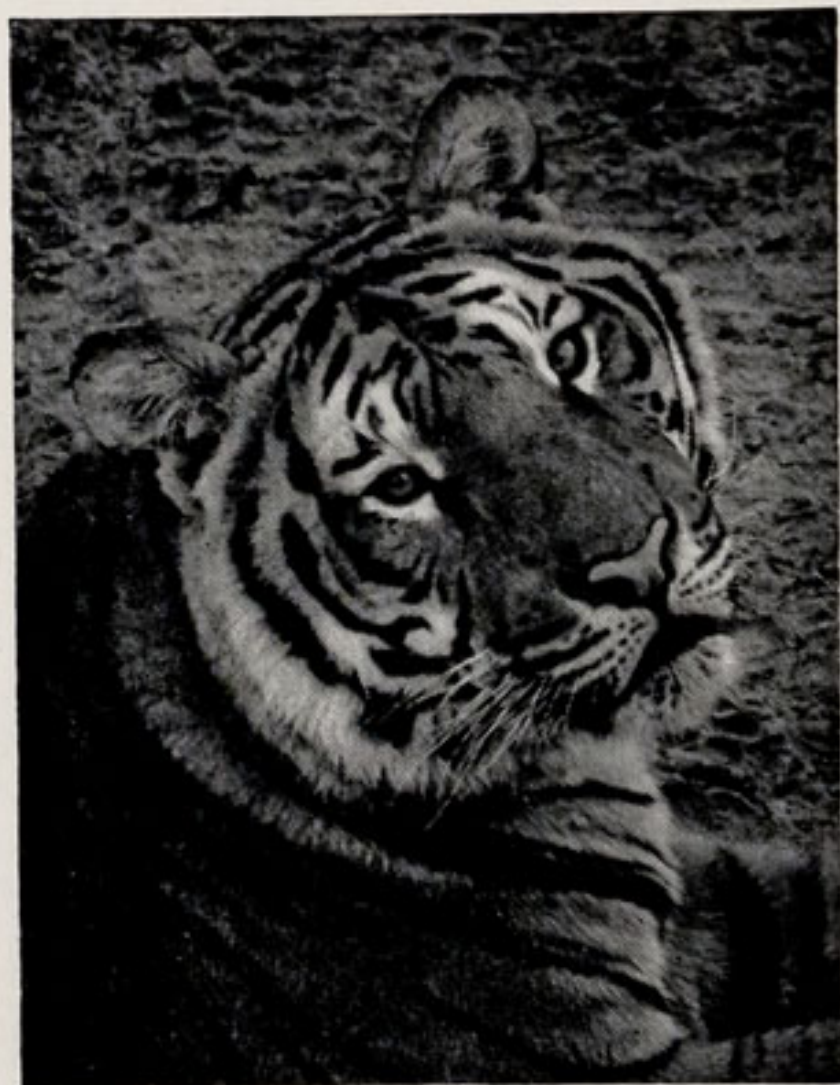
We have three Llamas (one male and two females) in the Collection at the present time. The two females arrived on the 5th of May, 1961 and the male was born in the Gardens on the 29th of June, 1962.



SAMMY

Mr. & Mrs. E. Sorby

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TIGER

TIGERS

Possibly the largest member of the Cat family is the Tiger — *Felis tigris*, found in Asia from the Eastern Caucasus to China and from Southern Siberia to southernmost India, Java, and Sumatra, but not in Ceylon and Borneo.

The coat is usually rust-yellow in colour with black transverse stripes; the under parts are white and there is white on the ears.

There are several races of Tiger, the Siberian being the largest and the Sumatra Tiger the smallest. The Siberian Tiger is somewhat paler in colour than the others and has fewer stripes. The Indian, or Bengal Tiger is very richly coloured and is a particularly powerful animal.

Tigers do not like great heat and will seek dense cover or lie in water, especially in reedy swamps alongside rivers, until just before sunset, when they hunt for food. Tigers live principally on antelope, deer, wild pig and monkeys, but also take sheep, goats and cattle. Age and possibly injury have turned tigers into "man-eaters", but usually they avoid encounters with man.

When born a tiger cub weighs only two to three pounds and, like other members of the cat family, is blind. Chester Zoo's pair of Bengal Tigers were born in the Rotterdam Zoo and came to Chester on the 12th of April, 1957, when they were ten months old. The two animals are in splendid condition and share the large open-air paddock opposite the Zoo Shop, where several litters of cubs have been born.

PROBLEMS

Since buildings such as the Tropical House are rare in the Zoo



E. Kirkland, F.R.P.S.

TIGRESS AND CUB

world, many of the concepts utilised break new ground and we expected problems. Probably the greatest problem so far encountered has been that of excluding our common English Sparrow.

Whilst in process of erection there were literally hundreds of these birds nesting in the building, but the numbers had been reduced to negligible proportions by the time the house was completed. To prevent a further influx of sparrows through the tunnels to the Gorilla and Orang Utan indoor enclosures, the tunnels were built with a twist so that the birds could not see in and would be forced to fly into darkness. However, it was not long before the impudent sparrows discovered that they could fly through in perfect safety.

As an experiment we fitted heavy rubber swing doors which the Apes could push aside at will. The door in the Gorilla tunnel has survived intact but we had to think again as far as the Orangs were concerned. "Jimmy" and friends soon demolished their door. Not satisfied with merely dismantling it, they painstakingly reduced the heavy rubber block to "confetti". The most worrying aspect

of this was that two of the Orangs swallowed particles of rubber and they were rather sick until we were able to get it out of their systems. Another rubber door, this time reinforced with nylon has so far resisted all efforts to dislodge it.

Another problem arose through the increased activity of the Crocodile and Alligators, due to the greater heat in their new quarters in the Tropical House. Several of the free flying birds, including Hummingbirds and an Indian Hill Mynah, landed in the enclosures and were quickly snapped up. In this case providing near natural conditions also produced natural hazards. Fortunately the birds now seem to realise the dangers of venturing too near the apparently motionless Crocodile and Alligators.

AQUARIUM NEWS

Several months ago we were unfortunate enough to lose a very fine specimen of Scorpion Fish — *Pterois volitans*. Since then we had been hoping to acquire another specimen to replace the original and were, therefore, very pleased to purchase four young Scorpion Fish on the 27th of July.

This is the first time that we have attempted to keep several Scorpion Fish together, as we had always imagined them to be rather anti-social. So far this has not proved to be the case. All four have settled down to peaceful co-existence and have already shown a phenomenal increase in growth.

At present the four fish are housed in a six foot long marine tank, furnished with rock shelves and various species of coral. The tank is heated to 24°C. and well filtered and aerated. Each Scorpion Fish is eating six fully-grown Sticklebacks daily but we will shortly attempt to introduce them to meat and herring, as this diet will be easier to maintain during the winter months, when live food is not so readily available.



ALLIGATORS

K. W. Green, A.R.P.S.



INDIAN HILL MYNAH

J. Gwyn Jones

On display near the Scorpion Fish are several young Turtles. These interesting little creatures were very kindly presented to us by two of our sea-faring visitors, who had collected them in the Ascension Isles and brought them back for the Aquarium. After the first few days the Turtles were placed in a heated tank and since then they have done very well. It is rather difficult to say with any certainty to which species they belong, because of their diminutive size. In a few months time certain characteristics will appear which should make identification easier.

Although often confused with their freshwater cousins, the Terrapins, a few minutes observation will soon prove these baby Turtles to be far more interesting. Not only are the Turtles stronger swimmers, but they are also far more graceful. At feeding time they will accept particles of food from the fingers and even though they are so small the baby Turtles are completely fearless.

Other additions to the Saltwater Collection were several species of Sea Anemone new to the Aquarium, a number of large Wrass, also Cottas, Sand Eels, Blennies and many invertebrates such as Shrimps, Prawns and Hermit Crabs.

Eight Marbled Cichlids — *Astronotus ocellatus* — were presented to the Tropical Freshwater Section of the Aquarium at the end of July.

Several new species of aquatic plant have been added to the existing collection. These include a type of large-leafed Bacopa, a bright red bog plant (which is similar in many way to the well-known Ludwigia grown in most Aquaria), varieties of Sagittaria and a red-leafed variety of Cabomba.

APOLOGY

We regret that the August number of this magazine is so late, due to staff holidays, etc. It is hoped to have the September issue out before the end of the month.



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